

Billing Code: 4710-05

Department of State

[Public Notice]

**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Request for
Grant Proposals: Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) and American
Serbia and Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE)
Programs' Organizational Component**

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 19.415

Key Dates:

Application Deadline: May 10, 2013

Executive Summary: The Office of Citizen Exchanges, Youth Programs Division, of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) announces an open competition for a cooperative agreement to manage the FY13 Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) and the American Serbia and the Montenegro Youth Leadership Exchange (A-SMYLE) Programs' Organizational Component. FLEX and A-SMYLE promote mutual understanding between the United States and the countries of Eurasia, Serbia, and Montenegro, by providing scholarships for high school students to live in the United States for an academic year. In turn, these students expose

U.S. citizens to the culture, traditions, and lifestyles of people of their home countries. Public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3) are invited to submit proposals to: (1) recruit and select international students from designated countries; (2) provide orientations for all participants; (3) coordinate travel and logistics; (4) liaise with ECA, U.S. embassies and natural families; (5) provide advice and counseling for students and placement organizations (POs); and (6) provide follow-on alumni programs that promote civil society, leadership, and mutual understanding. ECA intends to award one cooperative agreement for approximately \$12,100,000.

I. Funding Opportunity Description

I.1 Authority: Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests,

developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

I.2 Purpose: The FLEX and A-SMYLE programs seek to provide approximately 1,044 high school students from Eurasia (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Ukraine) and approximately 67 high school students from Serbia and Montenegro with an opportunity to live in the United States for the purpose of promoting mutual understanding between our countries. Programmatic activities will introduce students to youth leadership, civic education, civil society, and community service.

All participants will reside with American host families and attend high school during the 2014-15 academic year. Qualified organizations may submit a proposal to administer a cooperative agreement managing both programs as described below.

I.3. Project Options: The total amount of funding is approximately \$12,100,000. ECA anticipates awarding one cooperative agreement to manage both the FLEX and the A-SMYLE Organizational Component. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal project configurations, budgets, and participant numbers in accordance with program needs and the availability of funds. In addition, the Bureau reserves the right to adjust the participating countries should conditions change in a partner country or if other countries and/or regions are identified as Department priorities. The number of students who will participate is subject to the availability of funding in fiscal year 2013.

I.3a. Organizational Component

The accompanying Program Objectives, Goals, and Implementation (POGI) document describes in detail the award recipient's responsibilities. In general, the award recipient will be expected to:

- Develop all student marketing materials, handbooks, and all other standardized program materials, forms and publications.
- Maintain interactive website, social media, and mobile resources.

- Recruit and select participants to participate in an academic-year exchange in the United States.
- Provide cross-cultural training to staff and participants.
- Conduct student and natural family orientations.
- Develop and implement a targeted plan to recruit students with disabilities.
- Provide a specialized preparatory workshop for students with disabilities and conduct needs assessments to aid appropriate placement efforts.
- Collaborate with U.S. placement organizations (POs) to facilitate communication with participants' natural families.
- Implement a one-week Civic Education program in Washington, D.C. for approximately 100 FLEX students in Academic Year 2013-2014.
- Coordinate visa applications and transportation of all participants.
- Conduct alumni programs for all alumni, regardless of the year in which they participated.

I.3b. Program Goals: The goals of the Department of State's Academic Year Youth Exchanges are to promote mutual

understanding and foster relationships between the people of the United States and other countries. The youth exchange programs accomplish this goal by enabling students to:

- Gain an understanding of American culture, diversity, and respect for others with differing views and beliefs;
- Develop a sense of civic responsibility and commitment to community development;
- Foster relationships with youth from different ethnic, religious, and national groups;
- Develop leadership qualities they will need to lead their countries;
- Teach Americans about their home countries and cultures;
- Interact with Americans and generate enduring ties; and
- Share and apply experiences and knowledge in their home communities as alumni, initiating activities that focus on development and community service.

I.3c. Approximate Timeline: FY 2013 funding for the programs will support 2014-15 academic year exchanges (between August 2014 and June 2015) with students enrolled in accredited U.S. schools and placed with host families.

- June 2013: Cooperative Agreement awarded, pending the

availability of funds

- June 2013-November 2013: Marketing and student recruitment
- Academic Year 2013-2014: Civic Education Workshop for approximately 100 selected FLEX students.
- November-February 2014: Finalists and alternates selection
- March-May 2014: Student applications distributed to POs
- June-August 2014: Pre-Departure preparation and orientations of students
- August 2014: Staggered travel of students
- August 2014: Arrival workshop for students with disabilities
- Late August 2014: All final placement information for FLEX and A-SMYLE students (host family names and addresses, confirmed school enrollments) to be submitted to Department of State.
- May-June 2015: Return travel of students to home country
- June 2015-December 2016: Alumni programming
- June 2015: Re-entry orientations for FLEX and A-SMYLE students
- December 2016: Cooperative Agreement end date

I.3d. Other Component: The FLEX and A-SMYLE Programs also include a separate Host Family and School Placement and Monitoring Component. Additional information on placement for FLEX and A-SMYLE students is provided in the POGI.

I.4. Program Identity: All materials produced for program activities should bear the FLEX or A-SMYLE logo, the American flag, acknowledge the U.S. Department of State as the sponsor, and reflect the Department's goals for the program.

I.5. ECA and Embassy Activities and Responsibilities: In a cooperative agreement, ECA is substantially involved in program activities above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA's activities and responsibilities for this program include, but are not limited to the following:

- Providing guidance and assistance in the execution of the entire program Component, and requiring concurrence on many aspects of the program's implementation, materials, and procedures.
- Serving as liaison between the award recipients and personnel within the Department of State, including ECA, regional bureaus, and overseas posts.
- Monitoring and evaluating the program and its participants

through communications by email, phone, and site visits.

- Providing guidance on and clearing dates and venues for activities and events.
- Participating in student orientations and workshops.
- Coordinating with award recipient for student and alumni participation in appropriate Department of State activities; coordinating media coverage as appropriate to such activities.
- Requiring information about participants' biographical data, placement data, and alumni contact information.
- Issuing DS-2019 forms for international participants and alternates. All international participants will travel on a U.S. government designation for the J-1 Visa Exchange Visitor program.
- Creating and updating participants' SEVIS status and maintaining all SEVIS records.
- Approving program promotional materials and website information.
- Representing the U.S. government as the program sponsor at events and orientations.
- Performing an annual performance evaluation/review of the award recipient.

II. Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under Section I above.

Fiscal Year Funds: 2013

Approximate Total Funding: \$12,100,000

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: \$12,100,000

Anticipated Award Date: July 2013

Anticipated Project Completion Date: December 2016

Additional Information: Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this award for two additional fiscal years before openly competing it again.

III. Eligibility Information:

III.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

III.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the

Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, (Revised), Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

III.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

- a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with fewer than four years experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. Since an award to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange

program will exceed \$130,000, organizations with fewer than four years experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition. The Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

- b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process.

Please note: Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

Sub-Awards: Due to the scope and geographic breadth of this award, ECA anticipates that applicants will propose organizations as sub-award partners. Each partner must have at least four years of previous experience in youth exchange either placing students with host families or implementing programs within the respective country(ies), depending on the role of the

partner. The applicant will, however, be fully responsible for the oversight of its sub-award recipients. Further information on sub-agreements is provided in the OMB Circulars referenced in section VI.2.

IV. Application and Submission Information: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

Please contact the Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY, SA-5, Floor 3, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 632-6368, fax (202) 632-9355, or e-mail FLEX@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package. Please refer to Funding Opportunity Number ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14 (as listed at the top of this announcement).

Alternatively, an electronic application package may be obtained from Grants.gov. Please see section IV.3f for further information.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document, which consists of required application forms and standard guidelines for proposal preparation. It also contains the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document, which provides specific information, award criteria and budget instructions tailored to this competition.

Please specify the Funding Opportunity Number (ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14) located at the top of this announcement on all inquiries and correspondence.

IV.2. To Download a Solicitation Package via the Internet:

The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <http://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

IV.3. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission section below.

IV.3a. You are required to have a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a DUNS number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a DUNS number, access <http://www.dunandbradstreet.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your DUNS number is included in the appropriate box of the SF - 424 which is part of the formal application package.

IV.3b. All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, budget and budget narrative.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document and the Project Objectives, Goals and Implementation (POGI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

IV.3c. All federal award recipients must maintain current registration in the System for Award Management (SAM) database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in SAM until all program and financial activity and reporting have

been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. Failure to register in SAM will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways: 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form. 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or

senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of cooperative agreement activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

If your organization is a private nonprofit that has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. If you fail to include this documentation, your proposal will be declared technically ineligible.

IV.3d. Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

IV.3d.1. Adherence to All Regulations Governing the J-1 Visa

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs is the official program sponsor of the exchange program covered by this RFGP, and an employee of the Bureau will be the "Responsible Officer" for the program under the terms of 22 CFR 62, which covers the administration of the Exchange Visitor Program (J-1Visa). Under the terms of 22 CFR 62, organizations receiving awards (either a grant or cooperative agreement) under this RFGP will be third parties "cooperating with or assisting the sponsor in the conduct of the sponsor's program." The actions of recipient organizations shall be "imputed to the sponsor in evaluating the sponsor's compliance with" 22 CFR 62. Therefore, the Bureau expects that any organization receiving an award under this competition will render all assistance necessary to enable the Bureau to fully comply with 22 CFR 62 et seq.

The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the secure and proper administration of Exchange Visitor (J-1Visa) Programs and adherence by recipient organizations and program participants to all regulations governing the J-1Visa program. Therefore, proposals should explicitly state in writing that the applicant is prepared to assist the Bureau in meeting all requirements governing the

administration of J-1 Visa programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62. If your organization has experience as a designated J-1 Visa program sponsor, you should discuss your record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et. seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements. ECA will review the record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq. of applicant organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors by ECA's Office of Private Sector Exchange as one factor in evaluating the record/ability of organizations to carry out successful exchange programs.

The Office of Citizen Exchanges of ECA will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://jlvisa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division

U.S. Department of State

SA-44, Suite 668

301 4th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20547

IV.3d.2. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines

Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life. "Diversity" should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including but not limited to ethnicity, race, gender, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, and disabilities. Applicants are strongly encouraged to adhere to the advancement of this principle both in program administration and in program content. Please refer to the review criteria under the "Support for Diversity" section for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into your proposal. Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113

requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

Funds provided through this award may not be used to promote participation in, or to purchase equipment or supplies intended for, activities related to religious worship or proselytization. Host families, school officials, and POs shall not require program participants to attend religious services. However, as part of their exchange experience, participants may be offered the opportunity to take part voluntarily in this facet of their host culture, at their own discretion. Volunteer host families (who receive no financial benefit from cooperative agreement funds) are encouraged to enable participants living with them to attend services of the participant's religion, if the participant so desires and the services are available within a reasonable distance of the host family's residence.

IV.3d.3. Program Monitoring and Evaluation

Program Monitoring includes Participant Monitoring, which focuses specifically on ensuring students' safety and well-being throughout the year; see Review Criterion #5 for details and

instructions. This section focuses on other aspects of Program Monitoring.

Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators).

The more that outcomes are "SMART" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this RFGP.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the RFGP (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it: 1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

IV.3d.4. Virtual Exchange Component

ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest

one or more virtual exchange Component to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual Exchange Component would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

IV.3e. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

IV.3e.1. Applicants must submit SF-424A - "Budget Information - Non-Construction Programs" along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. Budget requests may not exceed \$12,100,000. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

IV.3e.2. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

IV.3f. Application Deadline and Methods of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: May 10, 2013

Reference Number: ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14

Methods of Submission

Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Find" portion of the system.

Along with the Project Title, all applicants must enter the above Reference Number in Box 11 on the SF-424 contained in the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) of the solicitation document.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via

Grants.gov. Please follow the instructions available in the "Get Started" portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/GetStarted>).

Several of the steps in the Grants.gov registration process could take several weeks. Therefore, applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this RFGP to confirm or determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Once registered, the amount of time it can take to upload an application will vary depending on a variety of factors including the size of the application and the speed of your internet connection. In addition, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "For Applicants" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the

Grants.gov system. ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes. Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.) EST of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Please refer to the Grants.gov website for definitions of various "application statuses" and the difference between a submission receipt and a submission validation. Applicants will receive a validation e-mail from Grants.gov upon the successful submission of an application. Again, validation of an electronic submission via Grants.gov can take up to two business

days. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

IV.3g. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

V. Application Review Information

V.1. Review Process

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau

regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. **Quality of Program Idea and Program Planning:** Your proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to the Bureau's mission and design. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate organizational competency and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview, timetable and guidelines described in the POGI. Your proposal should clearly demonstrate an understanding of the program's objectives and how your organization

will achieve them.

2. **Support of Diversity:** Proposals should demonstrate substantive support of the Bureau's policy on diversity in all program aspects including participants (exchange students and hosts), staffing, content of orientations, program activities, resource materials, and follow-on activities. Proposals should articulate a diversity plan, not just a statement of compliance.
3. **Organization's Record and Institutional Capacity:** Your proposal must demonstrate a well-established infrastructure throughout Eurasia, Serbia, and Montenegro, and procedures for overcoming challenges, such as coping with difficulties that might arise as a result of challenging governments in any of these countries. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the Program's goals and outcomes. Reviewers will assess the applicant and its partners, if any, to determine if they offer adequate resources, expertise, and experience to fulfill program objectives. Partner activities should be clearly defined. Proposals should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full

compliance with reporting and J-1 Visa regulatory requirements. Past performance of recipients will be considered. For new applicants, proposals should demonstrate capacity to participate in the Program. In addition, organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors must include a discussion of their record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq., including the oversight of their Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements. Proposals that fail to include the above information in their narrative will be deemed less or not competitive under this review criterion. ECA will review the record of compliance with 22 CFR 62 et seq. of organizations designated as Exchange Visitor Program Sponsors as one factor in evaluating the organization's record and institutional capacity to carry out successful exchange programs.

4. **Follow-on Activities:** Proposed programs should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual ties both during the exchange and after the participants return home.

Proposals should provide a plan for continued contact with alumni to ensure that they are tracked over time, utilized and/or organized as alumni, and provided opportunities to reinforce the knowledge and skills they acquired on the exchange and share them with others.

5. **Program Evaluation:** The proposal narrative must demonstrate how the applicant plans to assess the program's success in achieving program objectives and efficient operations, and what instruments will be employed to evaluate the program, including pre-departure orientations.
6. **Cost-effectiveness/Cost-sharing:** Budgets must be accurate, clear, and cost-effective. Applicants must include a budget narrative, which is separate from the proposal narrative that clarifies formulas used and costs that require further explanation and/or justification. The overhead and administrative Component of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. Proposals should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions. Proposals that demonstrate a high quality, cost-effective program will be deemed more competitive.

7. Value to U.S.-Partner Country Relations: Proposals

should indicate how the program is of value to U.S. and partner countries' interests, and receive positive assessments by the U.S. Department of State's geographic area desks and overseas officers with regard to the need for the program, potential impact, and significance in the partner countries.

VI. Award Administration Information**VI.1. Award Notices:**

Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and mailed to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

VI.2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements:

Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following:

- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-122, "Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations."
- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, "Cost Principles for Educational Institutions."
- OMB Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local and Indian Governments."
- OMB Circular No. A-110 (Revised), Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Nonprofit Organizations.
- OMB Circular No. A-102, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants-in-Aid to State and Local Governments.
- OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Government, and Non-profit Organizations

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants>

<http://fa.statebuy.state.gov>

VI.3. Reporting Requirements

You must provide ECA with an electronic copy the following reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be due 30 days after the reporting period.

(Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The performance reports (PPR) must be submitted electronically to the Grants Office at reportseca@state.gov with a copy sent to the Program Officer. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/> .

Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A SF-PPR, "Performance Progress Report" Cover Sheet must be submitted with all program performance reports.
- 3.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 4.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to IV. Application and Submission Instructions (IV.3.d.3) above for Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

All reports must be sent to the ECA Grants Officer and ECA Program Officer listed in the final assistance award document.

VII. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact Callie Ward (wardca@state.gov, 202-632-6431) or Amy Schulz (schulzaj@state.gov, 202-632-6052), U.S. Department of State, Youth Programs Division, ECA/PE/C/PY SA-5, 3rd Floor, ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20037.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this RFGP should reference the above title and number ECA/PE/C/PY-13-14.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the RFGP deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

VIII. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this RFGP are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the RFGP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section VI.3 above.

Ann Stock

March 25, 2013

Assistant Secretary

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

U.S. Department of State